



# Water Project Grants and Loans and Irrigation Modernization Funding Applications

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## Evaluation Summaries – 2025 Funding Cycle 2

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October 20, 2025

### Background

The Water Supply Development Account provides grants and loans for water projects that have economic, environmental and social/cultural benefits (ORS 541.651-696). In 2023, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 5030, providing \$50 million to the Water Supply Development Account to issue grants for irrigation modernization projects and \$10 million for Water Project Grants and Loans. In 2025, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 5531, providing \$8 million to the Water Supply Development Account to issue grants for Water Project Grants and Loans.

The application deadline for the second 2025 funding cycle was July 16, 2025. The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) received six complete applications requesting a total of \$2,867,712 in grant funding for Water Project Grants and Loans projects. OWRD received three complete applications for irrigation modernization funding requesting \$7,100,536 in grant funding.

### Document Description

The following are evaluation summaries for complete grant applications received for the second 2025 Water Project Grants and Loans (WPGL) and Irrigation Modernization Funding cycle. The multi-agency Technical Review Team (TRT) provided comments on each application, scored applications based on the criteria identified within the Scoring Criteria document, and made a funding recommendation to the Water Resources Commission (Commission) based on that evaluation and available funds. The following evaluation summaries highlight TRT comments gathered by OWRD during the application evaluation process and are prepared for the Commission's consideration and review. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Grants Analyst to request a review meeting and receive additional evaluation feedback. The evaluation summaries are listed in order of the TRT ranking.

The evaluation summary includes a combined public benefit score, which the TRT used to rank proposed projects. A table is also provided that shows a breakdown of the application score by category. An application could score up to 60 points in each of the economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefit categories. A proposed project could receive up to 20 additional preference points; up to 10 points for legally protecting water instream and up to 10 points for collaboration. Irrigation Modernization projects may receive an additional 10 points for legally protecting water instream commensurate with the amount required under the approach described in ORS 537.470 for a total of 30 preference points. Preference points are listed in the "Other" category. There is a maximum public benefit score of 200 points for WPGL projects and 210 points for Irrigation Modernization projects.

Based on the TRT ranking, the TRT recommends the top four WPGL projects for funding (Table 1). This funding recommendation considers the public benefits provided by these applications and available funding. OWRD has \$607,000 available for immediate award and an additional \$4 million potentially available for provisional award contingent on a spring 2026 lottery revenue bond sale. The WPGL projects not recommended for funding are in Table 2. Two projects are not recommended for funding as they did not achieve the minimum score required in each public benefit category.

The TRT also recommends funding two of the three Irrigation Modernization Funding applications received (Table 3). OWRD has \$4,303,179 available to award for Irrigation Modernization. The third project is not recommended due to insufficient funds (Table 4).

### Next Steps

**OWRD is soliciting public comment on the TRT ranking and funding recommendation through 5 pm on November 10, 2025.** Information on how to submit a public comment is available on the [website](#). Public comments submitted on the TRT ranking and funding recommendation will be presented to the Commission who will make a funding decision. The date for the Commission to make its funding decision is December 11-12, 2025.

### More Information

If you have questions please contact the Grants Analyst, Louisa Mariki, at 503-979-960 or [OWRD.Grants@water.oregon.gov](mailto:OWRD.Grants@water.oregon.gov).

## Water Project Grants and Loans Applications

**Table 1. Applications Recommended for Funding by the Technical Review Team**

Project Name	Applicant	County	Grant Funds Requested	Total Project Cost	Total Score
Oxbow Ranch Irrigation Modernization Project	Trout Unlimited	Josephine	\$564,800	\$1,146,288	90
Big Butte Creek Water Acquisition and Irrigation Efficiency Project	Trout Unlimited	Jackson	\$462,056	\$801,442	78*
Twickenham Irrigation Efficiency	Gabe Williams	Wheeler	\$958,856	\$1,491,515	63*
Hagenah Irrigation Efficiency Project	Angela Hagenah	Wallowa	\$405,000	\$850,572	33*
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$2,390,712</b>	<b>\$4,289,817</b>	

\* Provisionally recommended, subject to available funding. OWRD has \$607,000 available for immediate award and an additional \$4 million potentially available for provisional award contingent on a spring 2026 lottery revenue bond sale.

**Table 2. Applications Not Recommended for Funding by the Technical Review Team**

Project Name	Applicant	County	Grant Funds Requested	Total Project Cost	Total Score
Field 95 Aquifer Recharge Expansion Project	Madison Ranches, Inc.	Umatilla	\$402,000	\$4,073,000	17*
Falcon Cove Beach South Spring Intake Project	Falcon Cove Beach Domestic Water Supply District	Tillamook	\$75,000	\$95,000	7*
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$477,000</b>	<b>\$4,168,000</b>	

\*Not recommended because it did not meet the minimum public benefit score in one or more categories.

## Irrigation Modernization Funding Applications

**Table 3. Applications Recommended for Funding by the Technical Review Team**

Project Name	Applicant	County	Grant Funds Requested	Total Project Cost	Total Score
C-1 Piping Project	Powder Valley Water Control District	Union	\$2,498,000	\$10,409,000	98
Lone Pine Irrigation Modernization Phase 2 - Year 2	Lone Pine Irrigation District	Crook and Jefferson	\$336,236	\$3,337,224	55
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$2,834,236</b>	<b>\$13,746,224</b>	

**Table 4. Application Not Recommended for Funding by the Technical Review Team**

Project Name	Applicant	County	Grant Funds Requested	Total Project Cost	Total Score
Klamath Drainage District Irrigation Modernization Project	Klamath Drainage District	Klamath	\$4,266,300	\$16,878,000	69*
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$4,266,300</b>	<b>\$16,878,000</b>	

\*Not recommended due to insufficient funds.

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**2025 Irrigation Modernization Applications**

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<b>Lone Pine Irrigation Modernization Phase 2 - Year 2 .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Klamath Drainage District Irrigation Modernization Project .....</b>	<b>24</b>

## Overview of Application Scoring

The scoring criteria for applications to the Water Projects Grants and Loans and Irrigation Modernization funding opportunities are based on the public benefits a project is likely to achieve. Projects funded are those which are likely to achieve the greatest public benefits. The change in conditions anticipated to result in public benefits must be described and explained in the project application. When evaluating an application, the TRT examines public benefits in three categories: economic, environmental, and social/cultural. The TRT evaluates and scores each application based on the following questions and determines whether the project would provide exceptional, high, moderate, minor, or no public benefits, or minor or medium negative impacts. See the [Scoring Criteria document](#) for more information.

	Question
<b>Economic Public Benefits</b>	a. Does the project create or retain jobs?
	b. Does the project increase economic activity?
	c. Does the project result in increases in efficiency or innovation?
	d. Does the project result in enhancement of infrastructure, farmland, public resource lands, industrial lands, commercial lands or lands having other key uses?
	e. Does the project enhance economic value associated with tourism or recreational or commercial fishing, with fisheries involving native fish of cultural significance to Indian tribes, or with other economic values resulting from restoring or protecting water instream?
	f. Does the project result in increases in irrigated land for agriculture? (which may include increasing irrigated acres, agricultural economic value, or productivity of irrigated land)
<b>Environmental Public Benefits</b>	a. Does the project result in measurable improvement in protected streamflows?
	b. Does the project result in water conservation?
	c. Does the project result in measurable improvement in groundwater levels that enhances environmental conditions in groundwater restricted areas or other areas?
	d. Does the project result in a measurable improvement in the quality of surface water or groundwater?
	e. Does the project increase ecosystem resiliency to climate change impacts?
	f. Does the project result in improvements that address one or more limiting ecological factors in the project watershed?
<b>Social/Cultural Public Benefits</b>	a. Does the project promote public health and safety and of local food systems?
	b. Does the project result in measurable improvements in conditions for members of minority or low-income communities, economically distressed rural communities, tribal communities or other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes?
	c. Does the project promote recreation and scenic values?
	d. Does this project contribute to the body of scientific data publicly available in this state?
	e. Does this project promote state or local priorities, including but not limited to the restoration and protection of native fish species of cultural significance to Indian Tribes?
	f. Does this project promote collaborative basin planning efforts, including but not limited to efforts under Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy?

## 2025 Water Project Grants and Loans Applications:

### Oxbow Ranch Irrigation Modernization Project

**Applicant Name:** Trout Unlimited

**County:** Josephine

**Funding Requested:** \$564,800

**Total Project Cost:** \$1,146,288

**Project Summary:** The proposed irrigation modernization project at Oxbow Ranch in Josephine County would convert 137.8 acres to center-pivot irrigation in partnership with the landowner, Trout Unlimited, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. This upgrade would improve water application efficiency by 25–35%, enhancing agricultural productivity while reducing water waste and eliminating return flow impacts on water quality. Located in a priority watershed for flow restoration, the project supports conservation of ESA-listed species such as coho salmon, fall Chinook, winter steelhead, Pacific lamprey, and cutthroat trout. Through the Oregon Water Resources Department’s Allocation of Conserved Water Program, 100% of the conserved water (0.735 cfs) would be legally protected instream, directly contributing to long-term habitat restoration and flow reliability.

#### Technical Review Team Score and Comments

**TRT Recommendation:** Recommended for Funding

#### Public Benefit Scores:

Total Score	Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
90	30	28	22	10

**Review Summary:** The technical review team found that the proposed project offers substantial public benefits across economic, environmental, and social/cultural categories. The project is expected to enhance local economic activity, improve irrigation efficiency, and support agricultural productivity, while also delivering significant environmental gains through water conservation and instream protections. Additionally, the project aligns with regional conservation goals and demonstrates collaborative planning, contributing to long-term ecological and community resilience.

#### Economic Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) High public benefit from job creation and retention of three farm jobs. The project would generate short-term opportunities for contractors, equipment rentals, and related services during implementation.
- b) High public benefit from increased economic activity. The project would infuse \$700,000 into the local economy and double beef production capacity, supporting local supply chains.

- c) High public benefit from improved efficiency through conversion from wheel and hand lines to pivot irrigation and related infrastructure upgrades.
- d) High public benefit from infrastructure improvements that would expand hay and forage production and support a two- to threefold increase in livestock capacity.
- e) High public benefit from increasing flows that would support habitats for salmon and steelhead species valued for recreational fishing and of cultural significance to Tribes.
- f) High public benefit to the increase in agricultural value through irrigation upgrades that enhance productivity and expand capacity for both crops and livestock.

#### **Environmental Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) High public benefit from legally protecting water instream. One hundred percent of conserved water (26% of current use) would be permanently protected instream through OWRD's Allocation of Conserved Water Program.
- b) High public benefit in water conservation. The conversion from wheel line to sprinkler irrigation will increase water use efficiency by 30%.
- c) Minor public benefit to groundwater levels due to limited surface-to-groundwater connectivity. The review team noted that the anticipated benefit would be localized to the immediate project area.
- d) High public benefit from improved water quality. Protecting 0.735 cfs instream would improve temperature and water quality conditions in Deer Creek, which is impaired year-round.
- e) High public benefit to ecosystem resilience. Increased instream flows would enhance riparian vegetation, habitat conditions, and water quality during critical summer months, strengthening resilience to drought and climate impacts.
- f) High public benefit from addressing ecological limiting factors through the legal protection of water instream. The project would address key limiting factors related to water quantity and quality for multiple fish species contributing to recovery and habitat improvement goals identified in regional plans.

#### **Social/Cultural Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Moderate public benefit to local food systems. Improved irrigation efficiency and productivity would enhance food security in a local food desert. The review team noted the project's proximity to Deer Creek presents potential contaminant concerns, but the transition to pivot irrigation may mitigate these risks.
- b) Moderate public benefit to Oregon's environmental justice communities. Reviewers noted the absence of documented community engagement or feedback from environmental justice communities limited the score.
- c) High public benefit for recreational and scenic values. Improved water quality and quantity would support fishing, boating, and other outdoor recreation.
- d) Minor public benefit to the contribution of scientific data. The review team noted that ongoing data collection lacks a defined plan for public dissemination, limiting the benefit.



- e) High to exceptional public benefit from alignment with regional conservation and action plans supporting water conservation and native migratory fish protection.
- f) High public benefit from collaborative basin planning. The project demonstrates coordination with Tribal governments, conservation organizations, and alignment with the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) objectives.

## Big Butte Creek Water Acquisition and Irrigation Efficiency Project

**Applicant Name:** Trout Unlimited

**County:** Jackson

**Funding Requested:** \$462,056

**Total Project Cost:** \$801,442

**Project Summary:** The proposed project at Connect 3 Farm would enhance irrigation efficiency by converting 45 acres from flood to center-pivot irrigation and piping 2,300 feet of unlined ditch. One hundred percent of the water conserved through piping would be dedicated to instream through the Oregon Water Resources Department's Allocation of Conserved Water Program. Additionally, 26 acres of water rights (0.431 cfs) would be permanently transferred instream to benefit sensitive aquatic species, including state-listed Spring Chinook, ESA-listed SONCC Coho salmon, summer and winter steelhead, cutthroat trout, and Pacific Lamprey. The goal of the project is to improve irrigation efficiency and production for the irrigators and community by upgrading the irrigation system infrastructure while supporting streamflow restoration. This project supports both agricultural productivity and ecological restoration.

### Technical Review Team Score and Comments

**TRT Recommendation:** Recommended for Funding

#### Public Benefit Scores:

Total Score	Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
78	24	24	22	8

**Review Summary:** The technical review team found that the proposed project would deliver moderate to high public benefits across economic, environmental, and social/cultural categories. The project is expected to improve irrigation efficiency, enhance agricultural productivity, and legally protect water instream to benefit fish habitat and water quality. The project also aligns with regional drought resilience and conservation goals and demonstrates collaborative planning.

#### Economic Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Moderate public benefit from job creation during construction and retention of two full-time positions and a temporary project manager.

- b) Moderate public benefit to economic activity. The project would strengthen local agricultural production and support related industries.
- c) Moderate public benefit from improved irrigation efficiency through conversion from flood to center-pivot irrigation. The review team noted that the integration of a demonstration farm featuring permaculture practices, offering educational and environmental value adds an innovative dimension.
- d) Moderate public benefit from the enhancement of farmland and infrastructure improvements that strengthen agricultural productivity.
- e) High public benefit through legal protection of water instream supporting commercial and recreational fishing. The review team noted the additional water instream would enhance habitat for Chinook salmon, steelhead, and trout, species of ecological and cultural importance to Tribes.
- f) High public benefit to the increase in agricultural value and productivity of irrigated land through irrigation efficiency improvements. The project anticipates a 50% increase in hay production value as a result.

#### **Environmental Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) High public benefit from legally protecting water instream. The project would protect 0.43 cfs through an instream transfer and would protect instream one hundred percent of the water conserved through piping (0.17 cfs) through the Oregon Water Resources Department's Allocation of Conserved Water Program. Reviewers noted a lack of documentation on how the pivot system would function with the remaining 0.6 cfs.
- b) High public benefit in water conservation from converting from flood to center-pivot irrigation and piping 2,300 feet of open ditch. The review team noted that the project would benefit from clearer quantification of expected water savings.
- c) Minor public benefit to groundwater levels, as the application provided limited evidence or data to support claims of groundwater recharge.
- d) High public benefit in the improvement of surface water quality through reduced runoff and elimination of flood irrigation, supporting temperature and dissolved oxygen improvements in Hukill Creek and Big Butte Creek, both currently impaired for aquatic habitat.
- e) High public benefit to ecosystem resilience. Increased streamflow during critical summer months would lower water temperatures, enhance riparian vegetation, and improve habitat conditions.
- f) High public benefit to limiting ecological factors through the legal protection of water instream. The project would create a senior water right supporting native and ESA-listed fish species in a critical watershed.

#### **Social/Cultural Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Moderate public benefit to public health and safety from improved downstream water quality supporting public water systems. Increased agricultural production would strengthen local food systems.

- b) Moderate benefit to Oregon’s environmental justice communities. While the project is in an economically distressed area, the review team noted that the application lacked documentation of engagement with these communities.
- c) Moderate public benefit for recreational and scenic values. The additional instream water is expected to enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation and scenic enjoyment.
- d) Minor public benefit to the contribution of scientific data. Proposed water measurement and educational outreach lack defined methodology and public data-sharing plans. The review team noted that water measurement reporting to OWRD does not qualify as new public data.
- e) High public benefit through alignment with state and local priorities for drought resiliency and protection of culturally significant native fish species.
- f) High public benefit from strong collaborative basin planning efforts. The project demonstrates collaboration with local partners, alignment with basin planning objectives supported by letters of support, and consistency with Oregon’s Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

## Twickenham Irrigation Efficiency

**Applicant Name:** Gabe Williams

**County:** Wheeler

**Funding Requested:** \$958,856

**Total Project Cost:** \$1,491,515

**Project Summary:** The goal of the proposed project is to improve climate change resilience of agriculture and the ecosystem. Under this are four sub-goals/actions: to improve irrigation efficiency, increase agricultural production, improve climate/agricultural resilience, and increase instream flow. The proposed project would consolidate pumps and upgrade two centrifugal pumps to one more efficient turbine pump, replace the mainline system, upgrade existing pivots for improved efficiency, reduce and/or replace handline and solid-set irrigation systems with pivots, consolidate corner irrigation sections under high efficiency pivots, and apply activated biochar to the fields to improve water retention, reduce fertilizer needs, and improve microbial conditions. The applicant would legally protect 64.4% of the conserved water instream in the John Day River (approximately 0.97 cubic feet per second) through the Oregon Water Resource Department’s Allocation of Conserved Water Program. The applicant would apply 35.6% of the conserved water to place additional acreage into production which would improve the future viability of the agricultural operation.

### Technical Review Team Score and Comments

**TRT Recommendation:** Recommended for Funding

### Public Benefit Scores:

Total Score	Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
63	26	17	14	6

**Review Summary:** The technical review team found that the proposed project would provide high economic public benefits, including improvements in water and energy efficiency, agricultural productivity, and infrastructure, with added value as a regional pilot for sustainable biochar production. Environmental benefits include water conservation and moderate improvements to water quality and ecosystem resilience, though instream flow gains are relatively small. Social/cultural benefits were moderate overall, with contributions to scientific research and alignment with state conservation priorities.

### Economic Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) High public benefit from the creation of four temporary full-time positions and retention of existing staff. The project would increase crop yields generating seasonal harvest and processing employment. The review team noted the potential for future permanent biochar production positions.
- b) Moderate public benefit from increased short-term economic activity. Project implementation would stimulate local contracting and related industries, while also enhancing agricultural productivity and processing capacity to support local economic resilience.
- c) High public benefit from improved efficiency in water, labor, and electricity use. The project would serve as a regional pilot for biochar production, demonstrating sustainable practices through well-documented technical design and modeling. The review team highlighted the application's strong technical detail and effective use of visuals to illustrate expected outcomes.
- d) High public benefit from infrastructure enhancements. Upgrades to pivot and pump systems and replacement of outdated irrigation infrastructure would support transition to high-value specialty crops.
- e) Moderate public benefit from enhanced economic value related to tourism and recreation. The site's proximity to the John Day Fossil Beds and Scenic Byway provides secondary benefit, though fish recovery potential remains low due to seasonal flow constraints.
- f) High public benefit from increased irrigated acreage, expanding from 187.7 acres to 223.8 acres.

### Environmental Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Moderate public benefit from the legal protection of 64.4% of water instream (0.97 cfs) through OWRD's Allocation of Conserved Water Program. The review team noted that the increase in stream flow is small compared to overall flows in the John Day River and may have limited ecological impact.
- b) High public benefit to water conservation. The project would reduce water use by 23%.

- c) No measurable benefit to groundwater levels.
- d) Moderate public benefit to surface water quality. Biochar use and efficient irrigation practices would help reduce nutrient leaching, fertilizer use, and runoff. The review team noted that incorporating native riparian species could be more effective than pollinator-focused vegetation in addressing temperature impairments in the basin.
- e) Moderate public benefit to ecosystem resilience. Increased instream flow and biochar-related carbon sequestration would enhance climate resilience, with added benefit from pollinator habitat improvements.
- f) Moderate public benefit from addressing ecological limiting factors through pollinator habitat improvements, with minor contributions to fish habitat from legally protected instream water.

**Social/Cultural Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Minor public benefit to public health. No direct evidence of health or safety outcomes was provided. Expanded hay production would supply feed for local livestock operations.
- b) Moderate public benefit to environmental justice communities. Increased agricultural productivity would support economic stability in vulnerable populations.
- c) Minor to moderate public benefit related to recreational value. Additional instream water would support boating and floating opportunities, though benefits to fishing are limited.
- d) Moderate to high public benefit from the contribution of scientific data. The project would collect soil moisture, nutrient capture, and electrical conductivity data through a side-by-side biochar study shared via Oregon State University's Soils 205 course.
- e) Moderate public benefit through alignment with state and local priorities emphasizing water use efficiency, conservation, and climate resilience consistent with Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy.
- f) Moderate public benefit from coordination with the John Day Place-Based Planning working group. While the project provided data to the group, it is unclear whether the applicant actively participated in collaborative planning efforts.

## Hagenah Irrigation Efficiency Project

**Applicant Name:** Angela Hagenah

**County:** Wallowa

**Funding Requested:** \$405,000

**Total Project Cost:** \$850,572

**Project Summary:** The project would modernize flood irrigation infrastructure in Lostine, Oregon by installing a piped mainline across leased property to neighboring parcels and converting existing flood systems to solar-powered pivot irrigation. This upgrade would reduce water loss, improve efficiency, and expand usable agricultural acreage. The projects improvements include pipeline

installation, livestock watering troughs, and the replacement of open ditches with controlled irrigation systems. The use of solar energy would lower fossil fuel dependence, reduce long-term energy costs, and support sustainability goals. Additional benefits would include reduced labor demands, mitigation of runoff risks to nearby homes and roads, protection of native vegetation, and future connectivity for neighboring landowners to enhance their own systems.

### Technical Review Team Score and Comments

**TRT Recommendation:** Recommended for Funding

### Public Benefit Scores:

Total Score	Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
33	16	8	8	1

**Review Summary:** The technical review team found that while the proposed project includes promising elements, such as improved irrigation efficiency, renewable energy integration, and expanded agricultural production, many claimed benefits lacked sufficient supporting evidence. Environmental and social/cultural benefits were generally minor to moderate, with limited documentation of instream protections, ecological outcomes, or collaborative planning. The project aligns with some local priorities but would benefit from stronger data, clearer mechanisms for protection of water instream, and more robust community engagement.

### Economic Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Minor to moderate public benefit from the creation of one permanent position for irrigation and water measurement system maintenance. The project would generate short-term construction employment and increase seasonal labor demand as production expands.
- b) Minor to moderate public benefit from increased economic activity. Infrastructure upgrades are expected to improve production efficiency and reduce costs. The review team noted the application lacked supporting documentation to substantiate the proposed economic outcomes.
- c) High public benefit from improved irrigation efficiency and integration of renewable energy to power agricultural operations. The design would also improve water delivery efficiency for neighboring landowners.
- d) Moderate public benefit from farmland enhancement through investment in irrigation infrastructure.
- e) Minor public benefit from enhanced economic value associated with recreation. While the application referenced culturally significant fish species and regional ecological benefits, these claims were not supported by evidence of increased streamflow or a legal instream protection mechanism.
- f) Moderate to high public benefit from increased agricultural production value due to improved irrigation efficiency and expanded irrigated acreage, enabling higher-value crop production.

### Environmental Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) No public benefit from the legal protection of water instream. The application indicated the use of an “other” mechanism for instream protection but did not identify a legally recognized method to ensure the water would be protected.
- b) Moderate to high public benefits to water conservation through 40-50% water efficiency improvements.
- c) Minor public benefit to groundwater level improvements. Reviewers noted the absence of quantified data before or after implementation, limiting the ability to accurately assess impact.
- d) Minor to moderate public benefit to water quality through anticipated reductions in runoff, erosion, and nutrient loading. However, the absence of baseline data and post-project monitoring plan limits the ability to verify these outcomes.
- e) Minor to moderate public benefit from increased ecosystem resilience. Water conservation measures may enhance soil moisture and riparian health during critical summer months, though benefits are unverified due to limited data.
- f) Minor public benefit from addressing ecological limiting factors. While conserved water could potentially support fish reintroduction, the absence of enforceable instream protections limits the certainty of these benefits.

**Social/Cultural Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Moderate public benefit to local food systems through reduced chemical runoff and improved irrigation practices supporting sustainable agricultural production.
- b) Moderate public benefit to environmental justice communities. The project is located in a designated food desert and demonstrates engagement with surrounding landowners, contributing to economic and agricultural stability in a rural community.
- c) Minor public benefit to recreational and scenic values. Improved stream conditions could support fishing and water-based recreation; however, the absence of legally protected instream flows limits benefits.
- d) No public benefit from the contribution of new scientific data.
- e) No to minor public benefit from alignment with state and local priorities. While the project supports local goals for fish reintroduction and reduced water temperatures, the lack of an enforceable water management mechanism limits the potential impact of these benefits.
- f) Minor public benefit from collaborative basin planning efforts. The application provided limited documentation of coordination with basin partners or integration into broader strategic planning efforts.

## Field 95 Aquifer Recharge Expansion Project

**Applicant Name:** Madison Ranches, Inc.

**County:** Umatilla

**Funding Requested:** \$402,000

**Total Project Cost:** \$4,073,000

**Project Summary:** The proposed project would expand an existing aquifer recharge project near Echo Junction in Umatilla County. The goals of the project are to improve agricultural production, augment the aquifer, and enhance alluvial water quality. The project would add 44.3 acres of infiltration basin area and install a collector well and associated infrastructure. Water recovered from the alluvial aquifer via the collector well would support agricultural irrigation, and a portion would be injected into an Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) well to support recharge of the deep basalt aquifer.

### Technical Review Team Score and Comments

**TRT Recommendation:** Not Recommended for Funding

### Public Benefit Scores:

Total Score	Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
17	11	1	4	1

**Review Summary:** The technical review team found that the proposed project offers limited public benefits overall, with several claims lacking sufficient evidence or clarity. The project did not meet the minimum score of 5 in the environmental or social/cultural public benefit categories. While the project includes innovative elements such as aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) and irrigation infrastructure upgrades, concerns were raised about operational feasibility, given the project's limited data record and history of non-compliance under prior limited licenses. Notably, deficiencies in the collection and reporting of data affect the ability to confirm that the system functions as described. In addition, the application proposed constructing a new recharge basin in "Field 95," described as unused farmland for the past 10 years; however, crops were observed being grown there in July 2025, raising questions about site suitability for recharge.

### Economic Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Minor to moderate public benefit to job creation and retention. The project could extend seasonal employment with increased water availability; however, no new positions were identified.
- b) Minor public benefit from increased economic activity. The projects extended water availability may increase crop production and value. The review team noted a lack of supporting documentation to assess the likelihood of achieving the projected benefits.



- c) Moderate public benefit from increased efficiency and innovation. The project incorporates aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) methods, though evidence that water movement or recharge would occur as described remains unverified.
- d) Moderate public benefit from farmland enhancement through investment in irrigation and aquifer recharge infrastructure. Reviewers acknowledged the importance of such projects in the region but raised concerns about the clarity of the project's operations.
- e) No public benefit from enhanced economic value associated with recreation. Potential reduction in winter flows may negatively affect fish habitat and downstream ecosystems. Insufficient evidence was provided to demonstrate measurable benefit.
- f) Moderate public benefit from increased agricultural value through expanded irrigation capacity and crop diversity. Reviewers noted that reliance on the filtration basin use, and water availability reduces confidence in projected outcomes.

#### **Environmental Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) No public benefit as the project is not proposing to legally protect water instream. The review team questioned whether the project may have a minor detriment to instream flows.
- b) No public benefit from water conservation.
- c) No public benefit from improvements to groundwater levels.
- d) Minor public benefit to water quality from potential groundwater improvements through ASR. The review team noted that the monitoring plan lacks sufficient detail and spatial coverage to substantiate claims.
- e) Minor public benefit to ecosystem resilience. Seasonal water availability and wetland support may provide limited benefit under the proposed design.
- f) Minor public benefit from addressing limiting ecological factors. Reviewers questioned the claimed benefits of improving wetland habitats near crop fields and the claims to improved water quality.

#### **Social/Cultural Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Minor public benefit to public health, public safety, or local food systems. The project proposes crop expansion but lacks evidence linking outcomes to public health or drinking water quality improvements.
- b) No public benefit to environmental justice communities. The project is located in an environmental justice area, but the application did not document engagement or direct community benefits.
- c) Minor public benefit from the promotion of recreation and scenic values through private hunting access for big game and bird hunting.
- d) No public benefit from the contribution of new scientific data.
- e) Minor public benefit from alignment with state and local priorities related to nitrate reduction, drought mitigation, and water source improvement. The review team noted the application lacks a clear framework to effectively monitor progress toward these priorities.

- f) Minor public benefit from collaborative planning with local, state, federal, and Tribal partners. The project references regional frameworks such as the Umatilla Basin 2050 Plan but provided no documentation of active coordination or engagement with basin partners or communities.

## Falcon Cove Beach South Spring Intake Project

**Applicant Name:** Falcon Cove Beach Domestic Water Supply District

**County:** Tillamook

**Funding Requested:** \$75,000

**Total Project Cost:** \$95,000

**Project Summary:** The goal of this project is to restore the District's south spring, one of three key water sources, to active use for drinking water. An upgrade was attempted in 2016, however, the omission of a perforated collector pipe at the spring's discharge significantly reduced flow. This project would install a new collector pipe at the discharge area and reconnect the spring to the existing water system. A new intake screen would be drilled into the hillside at the spring source, flow-tested, and connected through a 4" solid pipe to the existing spring box. The system, which includes a small reservoir and pump station, would be chlorinated and brought online to support the District's water supply. Restoring the south spring is critical to ensuring a safe, reliable, and resilient water system for the District's users.

### Technical Review Team Score and Comments

**TRT Recommendation:** Not Recommended for Funding

### Public Benefit Scores:

Total Score	Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
7	4	1	2	0

**Review Summary:** The technical review team determined that the proposed project did not meet the minimum score of 5 in any of the public benefit categories, economic, environmental, or social/cultural. Overall, the application lacked sufficient detail and supporting documentation to substantiate its claims, resulting in limited demonstrated public benefit. While the project includes infrastructure rehabilitation and references potential improvements, the absence of quantifiable data, and collaborative planning significantly limited its scoring across all categories.

### Economic Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) No public benefit from job creation or retention associated with the project.
- b) No public benefit from increased economic activity. Reviewers noted the potential for short-term contracting during implementation, but the application provided no documentation to substantiate projected benefits to local business.

- c) Minor public benefit from increased efficiency. The application references potential improvements but lacks quantitative or technical evidence.
- d) Moderate public benefit from infrastructure enhancement. The project rehabilitates and improves existing systems, improving overall reliability.
- e) No to minor public benefit from enhanced economic value related to recreation. The application references increased water supply for short-term rentals such as Airbnbs; however, the variable nature of property use, and lack of documentation limit any measurable connection to public economic benefit.
- f) No public benefit from increased irrigated land for agriculture.

**Environmental Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) No public benefit as the project does not propose to legally protect water instream.
- b) Minor public benefit from water conservation. The project may reduce conveyance losses, but the application did not quantify volume or impact.
- c) No to minor public benefit from improved groundwater levels. Assertions of aquifer connectivity were not supported by scientific data or evidence.
- d) No public benefit from improvements to the quality in surface or groundwater.
- e) No public benefit from increased ecosystem resilience to climate change impacts.
- f) No public benefit from addressing limiting ecological factors within the project watershed.

**Social/Cultural Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Minor public benefit to public health through improved reliability of the local water supply.
- b) No public benefit to Oregon's environmental justice communities.
- c) No to minor public benefit to recreational and scenic values. While the application referenced improved drinking water for rental properties, it did not provide evidence linking these improvements to increased recreational use or broader public benefit.
- d) No public benefit from the contribution of new scientific data.
- e) No public benefit from alignment with state or local priorities.
- f) No public benefit from collaborative basin planning efforts.

## 2025 Irrigation Modernization Funding Applications:

### C-1 Piping Project

**Applicant Name:** Powder Valley Water Control District

**County:** Union

**Funding Requested:** \$2,498,000

**Total Project Cost:** \$10,409,000

**Project Summary:** The C-1 Project would modernize irrigation infrastructure within the Powder Valley Water Control District (PVWCD) in Union County, Oregon, by replacing approximately 3.4 miles of open ditch with buried, gravity-pressurized pipeline and retiring an additional 5.5 miles of aging canals. This upgrade would reduce water losses from seepage, evaporation, and operational spills, increasing storage in Pilcher Creek and Wolf Creek reservoirs and benefiting all 102 PVWCD patrons. The project would directly improve water delivery to six patrons irrigating 2,030 acres, enabling a transition from flood to efficient sprinkler irrigation. The project would conserve approximately 653 acre-feet of water annually. The applicant would legally protect 75% of the conserved water instream through the Oregon Water Resources Department's Allocation of Conserved Water Program (490-acre feet). The additional instream flow would enhance summer flows in Anthony Creek and the North Powder River to support ESA-listed bull trout and other aquatic species. The remaining 163 acre-feet would help fulfill existing water rights.

#### Technical Review Team Score and Comments

**TRT Recommendation:** Recommended for Funding

#### Public Benefit Scores:

Total Score	Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
98	28	25	25	20

**Review Summary:** The technical review team found that the proposed project would deliver high public benefits across economic, environmental, and social/cultural categories. With project elements including irrigation modernization, water conservation, and instream flow protection, the project supports agricultural productivity, ecosystem health, and public health outcomes. The project also demonstrates strong collaboration with Tribes and local partners, alignment with state priorities, and inclusive community engagement. These strengths contributed to high scores across all evaluation areas.

#### Economic Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- High public benefit from job creation and retention of jobs. The project would support 70 direct and indirect jobs over a one-year construction period, generating an estimated \$150,000 in annual labor income.

- b) High public benefit from increased economic activity. The proposed \$10.4 million construction investment would stimulate local economic sectors and yield long-term gains in agricultural productivity.
- c) High public benefit from increased efficiency. The project would pipe 3.4 miles of open ditch with buried gravity-pressurized pipeline, improving water use efficiency and operational reliability.
- d) High public benefit from the enhancement of farm and irrigation infrastructure, supporting the conversion from flood to sprinkler irrigation.
- e) Moderate public benefit from enhanced economic value associated with recreation. The review team noted impacts to fishing opportunities may be limited; however, filling and extended water retention in the reservoir could support tourism and local recreation.
- f) High public benefit from increased economic value of irrigated agricultural land. The project would modernize irrigation systems across 2,030 acres, convert flood irrigation to pressurized irrigation, and benefit 6 patrons. A portion of the conserved water (163 acre-feet) will be retained for agricultural use, improving water security.

#### **Environmental Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) High public benefit from the legal protection of water instream. The project would permanently protect 75% (490 acre-feet) of the conserved water through OWRD's Allocation of Conserved Water Program. The review team identified this as a significant ecological benefit.
- b) High public benefit from water conservation. The project estimates 653 acre-feet of water will be conserved per year.
- c) No public benefit related to groundwater level improvements.
- d) High public benefit from improvements in surface water quality. Piping and protected instream flows would reduce water temperatures, increase dissolved oxygen, decrease sediment loads, and support Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) goals for E. coli. The review team noted that the absence of baseline data may limit the ability to quantify these improvements.
- e) High public benefit from increased ecosystem resiliency to climate change. Protected instream flows during the irrigation season would support cold-water habitats, enhance hydrologic stability, and improve water quality. Reviewers noted the timing of these flows aligns with critical ecological needs.
- f) High public benefit from improvements that address limiting ecological factors. Increased streamflow and infrastructure upgrades would support temperature improvements and enhance habitat for fish species such as Redband Trout and Bull Trout.

#### **Social/Cultural Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) High to exceptional public benefit from the promotion of public health. The project would eliminate 5.5 miles of open ditch, reducing runoff, nutrient loading, and fecal contamination

that contribute to harmful algal blooms. It would also improve safety by removing drowning hazards and strengthen the local food system through more efficient sprinkler irrigation.

- b) High public benefit to Oregon’s environmental justice communities. The review team commended the applicant’s coordination with local communities and Tribes, noting inclusive engagement and responsiveness to environmental justice concerns.
- c) Moderate public benefit from the promotion of recreation and scenic values through increased streamflow’s and cooler temperatures that would enhance reservoir conditions and scenic appeal. While fishing benefits may be limited, the project could contribute to tourism and visual enjoyment.
- d) No public benefit from the contribution of new scientific data.
- e) High public benefit from alignment with state and local priorities. The project supports TMDL compliance, flow restoration, water quality improvement, and habitat enhancement for Redband Trout and Bull Trout.
- f) High public benefit from collaborative planning with local, state, federal, and Tribal partners. The project was developed through watershed planning efforts led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and local conservation partners in coordination with Tribes. The review team noted strong outreach efforts, demonstrating meaningful collaboration and transparency.

## Lone Pine Irrigation Modernization Phase 2 - Year 2

**Applicant Name:** Lone Pine Irrigation District

**County:** Crook and Jefferson

**Funding Requested:** \$336,236

**Total Project Cost:** \$3,337,224

**Project Summary:** The project would modernize the irrigation system by replacing 11,115 feet of inefficient open canals with pressurized HDPE pipe and laterals. This Phase 2 project was funded by OWRD in 2024, however, the applicant is facing a budget shortfall due to a shift from Three Sisters Irrigation District completing construction to a private contractor completing construction. The applicant is requesting funds for the second year of Phase 2 construction. Phase 2 is expected to conserve 1.5 cfs. The District would reduce their water right certificate(s) by 100% of the amount of water conserved through this project. Through an interdistrict agreement, the conserved live flow would be made available to the North Unit Irrigation District (NUID) for use as irrigation water during the irrigation season. NUID would release an equivalent amount during the winter season in Upper Deschutes River below Wickiup Reservoir via a secondary use right for flow augmentation.

### Technical Review Team Score and Comments

**TRT Recommendation:** Recommended for Funding

### Public Benefit Scores:

Total Score	Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
55	16	6	17	16

**Review Summary:** The technical review team found it difficult to distinguish the benefits of this project phase from those achieved in a previously funded phase, which limited the ability to fully assess its standalone impact. While the project offers moderate benefits in economic activity, infrastructure upgrades, and collaborative planning, many claims lacked sufficient detail or quantifiable evidence. Environmental benefits were generally minor, with limited measurable instream protections or water quality improvements. Social and cultural benefits were stronger in areas such as public safety and long-term planning, but the application would benefit from clearer documentation and more direct engagement with environmental justice communities and Tribes.

### Economic Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Minor public benefit from job creation or retention. The project anticipates short-term employment in the construction sector and long-term support for agricultural jobs; however, the review team noted insufficient detail regarding job types, duration, and quantity, which limits the strength of the claim.
- b) Moderate public benefit from increased economic activity. Stabilized water delivery would support 21 farms, with potential benefits including extended growing seasons and higher-value crop production.
- c) Moderate to high public benefit from increased efficiency through infrastructure upgrades that would improve irrigation system performance and reliability.
- d) Moderate to high public benefit from infrastructure enhancement. The project would improve irrigation delivery systems, contributing to more reliable water use and increased farmland productivity.
- e) Minor to moderate public benefit from enhanced economic value. Increased winter flows may support habitat for the Oregon spotted frog and offer recreational value.
- f) Minor to moderate public benefit from increased economic value and productivity of land, achieved through improved water supply resiliency and support for high-value crop production. Reviewers noted discrepancies in the phase documentation and a lack of clarity regarding which benefits are specific to the current project phase.

### Environmental Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) Minor public benefit from legally protecting water instream. The review team noted the application cited the project would conserve 1.5 cfs, which was the same number referenced in the Phase 2 application. The application would have been improved by clearly identifying the volume of water specifically associated with this phase.
- b) Minor public benefit from water conservation.
- c) No measurable improvement in groundwater levels.

- d) No public benefit to surface or groundwater quality.
- e) Minor public benefit to ecosystem resiliency to climate change impacts. While increased winter flows may support habitat for threatened species such as the Oregon spotted frog, the volume of water associated with this project phase, and therefore the extent of the impact was unclear.
- f) Moderate public benefit from improvements that address limiting ecological factors. The project may support habitat restoration for the Oregon spotted frog, though the volume of water is unlikely to benefit steelhead, Chinook, or trout.

#### **Social/Cultural Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) High public benefit from the promotion of public health and safety. Piping open canals would reduce the risk of drowning, with the application citing past near-drowning incidents highlighting the safety improvements for local residents. Additionally, piping would reduce the presence of chemicals in the water, improving conditions for both local residents and downstream Tribal communities.
- b) Moderate public benefit for Oregon's environmental justice communities. The review team noted limited direct engagement with environmental justice communities and no documented Tribal support.
- c) Minor public benefit from the promotion of recreational values. Increased flows may support whitewater rafting and scenic value along a five-mile stretch through Bend.
- d) No public benefit from the contribution of new scientific data.
- e) Moderate public benefit from alignment with state and local priorities through long-term collaborative regional efforts involving municipalities, Tribes, and community members.
- f) High public benefit from the promotion of collaborative basin planning efforts. The project builds on more than a decade of basin-wide planning and coordination among multiple diverse partners. Reviewers acknowledged the complexity and negotiation required to implement the project; however, they noted that the application would be strengthened by the inclusion of updated letters of support.

## **Klamath Drainage District Irrigation Modernization Project**

**Applicant Name:** Klamath Drainage District

**County:** Klamath

**Funding Requested:** \$4,266,300

**Total Project Cost:** \$16,878,000

**Project Summary:** The proposed project would enhance water delivery and ecological function by extending the North Canal 0.47 miles (approximately 2,500 feet) from Fugate Road to Highway 161, linking it to the P1 Lateral and establishing a new delivery point to the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. The project would increase operational efficiency by upgrading the E and F



pumping plants to a common voltage, adding variable frequency drives, and installing a recirculation pipeline from the westernmost E Pump to the Center Canal. The project would install a new fish screen at the North Canal Diversion, which would protect aquatic species. The project would also install 14 SCADA units at 12 sites which would enable precise, real-time water management.

#### Technical Review Team Score and Comments

**TRT Recommendation:** Not Recommended for Funding

#### Public Benefit Scores:

Total Score	Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
69	28	14	22	5

**Review Summary:** The technical review team found this to be a project with high public benefits across economic, environmental, and social/cultural categories; however, it is not recommended for funding due to limited available funds. The project would support job creation, agricultural productivity, and habitat enhancement in a rural, economically distressed region. It also aligns with state priorities for fish passage, water quality, and collaborative basin planning. The project demonstrates strong regional coordination and long-term environmental value.

#### Economic Public Benefits:

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) High public benefit from job retention and creation in a rural and isolated area. The project is expected to support 40 jobs, equivalent to 13 full-time positions, including 30 construction roles and 10 indirect community-based positions.
- b) High public benefit from increased economic activity. The project would generate \$12 million in regional spending, including \$2.2 million in labor income over a three-year period.
- c) High public benefit from increased efficiency. Modernized equipment, fish screen installation, and SCADA integration would improve system management and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- d) High public benefit from farmland enhancement through investment in irrigation infrastructure that would support agricultural productivity and water delivery reliability.
- e) High public benefit from enhanced economic value associated with recreation and fisheries involving fish of cultural significance to Tribes. The project would increase recreational value by supporting water delivery to 300 acres of new wetland in the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. The fish screen at the North Canal diversion would eliminate entrainment of species culturally important to Tribes, while the recirculation pipeline would prevent nutrient-rich water from entering the Klamath River, thereby improving conditions for those same species.
- f) High public benefit from increased irrigated land for agriculture. The project would help stabilize water supply for 27,000 acres of farmland, enhancing agricultural resilience and productivity.

**Environmental Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) No public benefit, as the project does not propose to legally protect water instream.
- b) Minor public benefit from water conservation. The project would support SCADA upgrades and recirculation systems to improve water use efficiency. Reviewers noted the absence of quantified conservation estimates and noted that recirculation constitutes reuse rather than conservation.
- c) No measurable improvement in groundwater levels.
- d) Moderate public benefit in the improvement of surface water quality. The recirculation system would reduce nutrient loading by reusing water containing nitrogen and phosphorus for irrigation, thereby supporting water quality objectives.
- e) High public benefit from increased ecosystem resiliency to climate change impacts. Water reuse, improved water quality, and enhanced drought resilience would support natural storage and habitat protection, contributing to ecosystem stability.
- f) High public benefit from improvements addressing limiting ecological factors. Rerouting water to the refuge would reduce pollution and runoff while improving habitat conditions for native sucker species in a high-priority ecological area.

**Social/Cultural Public Benefits:**

The review team found the proposed project would likely result in:

- a) High public benefit from the promotion of public health. The project would reduce nutrient loading and growth of aquatic plants and algae through the circulation pipeline insulation. Reviewers noted 303(d) impairments for public health and ammonia in the area, emphasizing the importance of mitigating harmful algal blooms.
- b) Moderate to high public benefit for Oregon's environmental justice communities. The project is located in a rural, economically distressed region with elevated risks for wildfire and food insecurity. Reviewers noted that long-term basin modernization efforts have included outreach and coordination benefiting these communities.
- c) Minor public benefit to recreational and scenic values. Improved water delivery to the refuge may enhance wetland and scenic qualities, though the project provides limited direct recreational benefit.
- d) No public benefit from the contribution of new scientific data.
- e) High public benefit from alignment with state and local priorities. The project supports fish passage and habitat improvement through the installation of fish screens benefiting ESA-listed sucker species.
- f) High to exceptional public benefit from collaborative basin planning efforts. The project advances a basin-wide environmental plan led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and supported by state and local partners. Documented stakeholder engagement, including coordination with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and watershed groups, reflects a strong and ongoing collaborative approach.